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Focus ON READING

Vocabulary

READING
COMPREHENSION

Out of the Dust

Karen Hesse

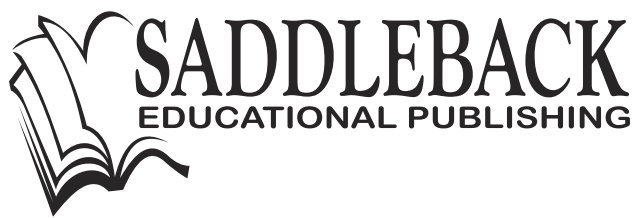
ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Reproducible Activities

Focus **ON READING**

*Out of
the Dust*

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Introduction/Classroom Management

WELCOME TO *FOCUS ON READING*

Focus on Reading literature study guides are designed to help all students comprehend and analyze their reading. Many teachers have grappled with the question of how to make quality literature accessible to all students. Students who are already avid readers of quality literature are motivated to read and are familiar with prereading and reading strategies. However, struggling readers frequently lack basic reading skills and are not equipped with the prior knowledge and reading strategies to thoroughly engage in the classroom literature experience.

Focus on Reading is designed to make teachers' and students' lives easier! How? By providing materials that allow all students to take part in reading quality literature. Each *Focus on Reading* study guide contains activities that focus on vocabulary and comprehension skills that students need to get the most from their reading. In addition, each section within the guide contains a before-reading **Focus Your Reading** page containing tools to ensure success: **Vocabulary Words to Know**, **Things to Know**, and **Questions to Think About**. These study aids will help students who may not have the prior knowledge they need to truly comprehend the reading.

USING *FOCUS ON READING*

Focus on Reading is designed to make it easy for you to meet the individual needs of students who require additional reading skills support. Each *Focus on Reading* study guide contains teacher and student support materials, reproducible student activity sheets, an end-of-book test, and an answer key.

- **Focus on the Book**, a convenient reference page for the teacher, provides a brief overview of the entire book including a synopsis, information about the setting, author data, and historical background.
- **Focus Your Knowledge**, a reference page for students, is a whole-book, prereading activity designed to activate prior knowledge and immerse students in the topic.

The study guide divides the novel into 6 manageable sections to make it easy to plan classroom time. Five activities are devoted to each section of the novel.

Before Reading

- **Focus Your Reading** consists of 3 prereading sections:

Vocabulary Words to Know lists and defines 10 vocabulary words students will encounter in their reading. Students will not have to interrupt their reading to look up, ask for, or spend a lot of time figuring out the meaning of unfamiliar words. These words are later studied in-depth within the lesson.

Things to Know identifies terms or concepts that are integral to the reading but that may not be familiar to today's students. This section is intended to "level the playing field" for those students who may not have much prior knowledge about the time period, culture, or theme of the book. It also gets students involved with the book, increasing interest before they begin reading.

Questions to Think About helps students focus on the main ideas and important details they should be looking for as they read. This activity helps give students a *purpose* for reading. The goal of these guiding questions is to build knowledge, confidence, and comfort with the topics in the reading.

During Reading

- **Build Your Vocabulary** presents the 10 unit focus words in the exact context of the book. Students are then asked to write their own definitions and sentences for the words.
- **Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice** offers 10 multiple-choice, literal comprehension questions for each section.
- **Check Your Understanding: Short Answer** contains 10 short-answer questions based on the reading.

After Reading

- **Deepen Your Understanding** is a writing activity that extends appreciation and analysis of the book. This activity focuses on critical-thinking skills and literary analysis.
- **End-of-Book Test** contains 20 multiple-choice items covering the book. These items ask questions that require students to synthesize the information in the book and make inferences in their answers.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Focus on Reading is very flexible. It can be used by the whole class, by small groups, or by individuals. Each study guide divides the novel into 6 manageable units of study.

This literature comprehension program is simple to use. Just photocopy the lessons and distribute them at the appropriate time as students read the novel.

You may want to reproduce and discuss the **Focus Your Knowledge** page before distributing the paperbacks. This page develops and activates prior knowledge to ensure that students have a grounding in the book before beginning reading. After reading this whole-book prereading page, students are ready to dive into the book.

The **Focus Your Reading** prereading activities are the keystone of this program. They prepare students for what they are going to read, providing focus for the complex task of reading. These pages should be distributed before students actually begin reading the corresponding section of the novel. There are no questions to be answered on these pages; these are for reference and support during reading. Students may choose to take notes on these pages as they read. This will also give students a study tool for review before the **End-of-Book Test**.

The **Focus Your Reading** pages also provide an excellent bridge to home. Parents, mentors, tutors, or

other involved adults can review vocabulary words with students, offer their own insights about the historical and cultural background outlined, and become familiar with the ideas students will be reading about. This can help families talk to students in a meaningful way about their reading, and it gives the adults something concrete to ask about to be sure that students are reading and understanding.

The **Build Your Vocabulary** and **Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice** and **Short Answer** activities should be distributed when students begin reading the corresponding section of the novel. These literature guide pages are intended to help students comprehend and retain what they read; they should be available for students to refer to at any time during the reading.

Deepen Your Understanding is an optional extension activity that goes beyond literal questions about the book, asking students for their own ideas and opinions—and the reasons behind them. These postreading activities generally focus on literary analysis.

As reflected in its title, the **End-of-Book Test** is a postreading comprehension test to be completed after the entire novel has been read.

For your convenience, a clear **Answer Key** simplifies the scoring process.

Focus on the Book

Synopsis

Fourteen-year-old Billie Jo has a great deal to cope with. Growing up in the Oklahoma Dust Bowl of the mid-1930s, she relates how her mother and baby brother die after a terrible accident with burning kerosene. Blaming both herself and her father, she is unable to work through her pain and grief by playing the piano because of the burns on her hands. To make matters worse, dust storms are devastating the family farm and all the farms nearby. Faced with almost insurmountable odds, Billie Jo runs away but quickly returns to her roots—her home of dust and her father. Told in a free verse form that allows the narrator to speak for herself, this compelling tale effectively communicates a young woman's fierce spirit and developing self-knowledge.

About the Author

Karen Hesse decided to write about the Dust Bowl when she was driving to Colorado with a friend and fell in love with the plains. She began thinking about times in this country when people really wanted it to rain. So she came back to the Dust Bowl. She then began researching and became fascinated by that period and the people living then. Before writing *Out of the Dust*, she studied books about growing wheat and living on a farm in that period. She studied the effects of the dust on farmers and nonfarmers living in that area. Ms. Hesse also read newspapers from that time period and drew many of the events in the book directly from newspaper accounts.

In conducting her research of this time period, Ms. Hesse also learned the effects of dust throughout the world. One thing she learned was that ships out at sea—200 miles out into the Atlantic—could see dust tracing all the way back to the Kansas or Oklahoma prairie.

When asked why she chose to write *Out of the Dust* in blank verse, Ms. Hesse replied, "I don't think I ever consciously decided to write this book in blank verse, but when I tried to put my finger on who Billie Jo was, and how she would speak, I realized she lived a very spare life. Everything she did was carefully considered, because it took so much to survive, to get through one day living with parents who were struggling. It seemed as if the only way to get at that spareness was to tell it through poetry."

Historical Background

The setting of *Out of the Dust* is the Oklahoma Panhandle, a part of the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. It was a term born in the hard time from the people who lived during the Great Depression in the drought-stricken region of the country. The area covered some 50,000,000 acres and included parts of Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma.

The Dust Bowl period lasted about a decade. It was a time of extremes: tornadoes, floods, blizzards, droughts, and dirt storms. Although the primary area of impact was the southern Plains, a ripple effect in the northern Plains brought agricultural decline. This agricultural devastation helped to lengthen the Great Depression, whose effects were felt worldwide. In addition, the movement of people on the Plains was profound.

The Dust Bowl was caused by years of poor agricultural practices and drought. Farmers had come to the Plains lured by the promise of rich, plentiful soil. They brought with them farming techniques that had worked well in the North and East. They subsequently plowed millions of acres of grassland, only to be faced with drought. The grasslands of the Plains had been plowed and planted with wheat. In the years of adequate rainfall, there was a bountiful crop of wheat. However, as the droughts of the early 1930s deepened, the farmers continued to plow and plant and nothing would grow. As winds whipped across the fields of the Plains, huge clouds of dust swept across the landscape.

Out of the horror of the Dust Bowl came new farming methods and techniques. A new era of soil conservation was ushered in. In April of 1935, Congress declared soil erosion "a national menace" in an act establishing the Soil Conservation Service in the Department of Agriculture. The SCS developed extensive conservation programs that retained topsoil and prevented irreparable damage to the land.

In the fall of 1939, the rain began to fall, finally bringing an end to the drought. During the next few years, the country pulled out of the Great Depression and the Plains once again became golden with wheat.

Focus Your Knowledge

During the time of the Great Depression in the 1930s, dust storms devastated a part of the Plains region of the United States. This region was called the Dust Bowl.

- Look at a current map of the United States. Identify the five-state region known as the Dust Bowl. The states are Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Gather information about the terrain of the land, general weather patterns, sources of water, and economic activity.
- Next, recall everything you have ever known about the Dust Bowl. Have you ever heard of it? What images come to mind when you hear the words *dust bowl*?
- Who was affected by the dust storms of the Dust Bowl? What happened to cause this region to become a dust bowl? What images come to mind when you think about America in the 1930s?
- Look at the photograph below. This picture of a dust storm was taken from a 100 foot-high water tower, looking down on the small town of Rolla, Kansas, on May 6, 1935. How does this photograph help you imagine what it must have been like to experience a duster? As you read *Out of the Dust*, keep this image in mind. It will help you visualize the devastation of the Plains and the strength and courage of Billie Jo and all the people who survived this terrible time.



Courtesy of FDR Library

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

fidgety—nervous; uneasy; making unnecessary fuss

wagering—betting; gambling

scowl—to frown

riled—to upset; to irritate

testy—easily annoyed; marked by impatience

distracted—to have drawn someone's attention away from something; turned aside

whittled—pared down; reduced

maggoty—having the characteristics of a maggot

spindly—frail or flimsy in appearance

drought—a prolonged period of dryness

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

The **Panhandle** refers to the western portion of Oklahoma, a strip of land 166 miles long and 34 miles wide.

Lubbock is a city in the Texas Panhandle.

Jacks is a shortened form of *jackrabbits*.

A **plowboy** is a boy who leads the team of animals drawing a plow.

FDR, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was the thirty-second president of the United States (1933–1945). He assumed the presidency during the Great Depression. He brought hope to people at this dark time by promising prompt, vigorous action. He said in his Inaugural Address, “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

Birthday Balls were dances that were held across the country to raise money for the Warm Springs Foundation established by President Roosevelt.

The **Warm Springs Foundation** was founded in 1927 by Franklin Roosevelt. The foundation was established to raise money for people with disabilities. FDR was himself disabled by polio. The foundation staged birthday parties in FDR's honor across the country. The first series of parties—in 1934—raised over a million dollars for the foundation.

Amarillo is a city in the Texas Panhandle.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. In what ways does Billie Jo's restlessness come out?
2. In the poem "Rabbit Battles," how does Billie Jo's maturity shine through?
3. What are Billie Jo's feelings about her friend Livie moving away?
4. How do you think Billie Jo feels about Mad Dog Craddock?
5. Why do you think Ma always gets "testy" about Billie Jo wanting to play the piano?
6. Why are the "rules for dining" necessary? How does this ritual emphasize the difficulty of living during these times?

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. "... I've been restless in this little Panhandle shack we call home, always getting in Ma's way with my pointy elbows, my **fidgety** legs."
fidgety: _____
2. "They pledged revenge on the rabbit population; **wagering** who could kill more. They ought to just shut up. Betting on how many rabbits they can kill."
wagering: _____
3. "Now they can't be civil with each other. They **scowl** as they pass on the street."
scowl: _____
4. "I suspected Mad Dog had come first to Arley Wanderdale's mind, but I didn't get too **riled**. Not so **riled** I couldn't say yes."
riled: _____
5. "She always gets **testy** about me playing, even though she's the one who truly taught me."
testy: _____
6. "... this time I caught her in the slow stirring of biscuits, her mind on other things ... she was **distracted** enough."
distracted: _____
7. "We haven't had a good crop in three years, ... and we're all **whittled** down to the bone these days."
whittled: _____
8. "... I glare at Ma's back with a scowl foul as **maggoty** stew."
maggoty: _____
9. "The night sky kept flashing, lightning danced down on its **spindly** legs."
spindly: _____
10. "I watched the plants, surviving after so much **drought** and so much wind, I watched them fry, or flatten."
drought: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. At what time of year was Billie Jo born?
 - a. spring
 - b. summer
 - c. autumn
2. Where does Billie Jo's friend Livie Killian move?
 - a. Lubbock
 - b. Cimarron County
 - c. California
3. Who is Arley Wanderdale?
 - a. music teacher
 - b. piano player
 - c. talent scout
4. How does Billie Jo ask her mother for something she wants?
 - a. She asks her father to ask for her.
 - b. She waits until her mother is asleep and then asks her.
 - c. She catches her mother off-guard when she is distracted.
5. What is "heaven" to Billie Jo?
 - a. getting Mad Dog Craddock's attention
 - b. playing the piano
 - c. walking in a rainstorm
6. Where is Billie Jo asked to play the piano?
 - a. at the White House
 - b. at the Warm Springs Foundation
 - c. at the President's Birthday Ball
7. Why does Mr. Hardly have a bad reputation?
 - a. He doesn't like young girls and is rude to them.
 - b. He doesn't stock necessary items in his store.
 - c. He doesn't give the correct change.
8. When is Billie Jo dazzled by her mother?
 - a. when her mother is busy in the kitchen
 - b. when her mother is pregnant
 - c. when her mother is playing the piano
9. What city is fifty miles from Billie Jo's home?
 - a. Joyce City
 - b. Amarillo
 - c. Washington, D.C.
10. Why is Billie Jo's father considering a loan from the government?
 - a. to pay for a doctor for the new baby
 - b. to buy some wheat to plant a new crop
 - c. to get money for food for his family

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. Why does Livie Killian's family move west?
2. Why does Billie Jo enjoy playing with the Black Mesa Boys?
3. What are two ways Billie Jo's family members demonstrate their goodness?
4. What happens to Mr. Hardly to put him in such a foul temper?
5. What are the "rules for dining"? What is the purpose of the rules?
6. What happens to Livie Killian's family once they go west?
7. How old was Billie Jo when she learned to play the piano? Who taught her to play?
8. How does Ma explain Daddy's optimism about rain to Billie Jo?
9. What does Billie Jo think are the reasons Ma won't allow Billie Jo to play the piano for the Sunny of Sunnyside show?
10. Why is Billie Jo disappointed in Ma's reaction to her wonderful test scores?

Deepen Your Understanding

Mood refers to the climate of feeling, or atmosphere, created by the author. Describe the mood of Billie Jo's poems. Does she seem serious? Lighthearted? Worried? Give specific examples from various poems.

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

dazed—stunned

wince—to shrink back; flinch

sorghum—a kind of grass, similar to Indian corn

leveling—knocking down of something; putting it on an equal level

boughs—branches of trees

tart—agreeably sharp or biting in taste

searing—burning; scorching

combine—a harvesting machine

rag—a song or music in ragtime

gripe—complain

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

By March of 1933, there were 13,000,000 unemployed people in the United States, and almost every bank was closed. When **banks** ran out of money, they were said to have **failed**.

Madame Butterfly is one of the world's most popular operas.

The Great War refers to World War I (1914–1918).

A **bushel** is a unit of measurement, equal to 4 pecks or 32 quarts.

Poppies are showy red flowers.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. What are some of the ways Billie Jo is tested by the dust?
2. What is a source of comfort to Billie Jo during all this hardship? What brings her pleasure?
3. How does dust cause tension within Billie Jo's family?
4. Why do you think Ma sometimes throws up roadblocks to Billie Jo's playing the piano?

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. "Joe De La Flor doesn't see me pass him by; he rides his fences, **dazed** by dust."
dazed: _____
2. "I **wince** at the sight of his rib-thin cattle."
wince: _____
3. "Plant some other things . . . Try cotton, **sorghum**. If we plant the fields in different crops, maybe some will do better. . . ."
sorghum: _____
4. "Nothing needs more to drink than those two [trees]. But you wouldn't hear of **leveling** your apples, would you?"
leveling: _____
5. "I stand under the trees and let the petals fall into my hair, a blizzard of sweet-smelling flowers, dropped from the **boughs** of the two placed . . . in the front yard. . . ."
boughs: _____
6. "To eat them now, so **tart**, would turn my mouth inside out, would make my stomach groan."
tart: _____
7. "On Sunday, winds came, bringing a red dust like prairie fire, hot and peppery, **searing** the inside of my nose. . . ."
searing: _____
8. "The **combines** have started moving across the fields, bringing in wheat, . . ."
combines: _____
9. "And every little crowd is grateful to hear a **rag** or two played on the piano. . . ."
rag: _____
10. "Ma said okay, but only for the summer, and only if she didn't hear me **gripe** how I was tired, . . ."
gripe: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. What will happen to the money the Kelbys lost when the bank failed?
 - a. It will be used to pay off their debt.
 - b. It will be donated to the government.
 - c. It will be given back to them.
2. Why doesn't Joe De La Flor see Billie Jo when she passes by?
 - a. He is too busy with the cattle.
 - b. He is dazed by the dust.
 - c. He is blind.
3. What does Ma want to plant on the farm?
 - a. just wheat
 - b. just cotton and sorghum
 - c. a variety of other crops
4. What is Billie Jo's teacher doing at the Shrine?
 - a. teaching
 - b. dancing
 - c. singing
5. What kind of trees does Ma have?
 - a. blossom
 - b. apple
 - c. wheat
6. In what war did Billie Jo's dad fight?
 - a. the Spanish American War
 - b. World War I
 - c. World War II
7. According to Billie Jo, where is her place in the world?
 - a. on the road with Arley Wanderdale
 - b. on the farm
 - c. at the piano
8. What helps convince Ma to let Billie Jo go on the road with Arley?
 - a. the money Billie Jo would be paid
 - b. the compliment paid to Ma by Arley and his wife
 - c. both of the above
9. What is Ma going to do with Billie Jo's earnings?
 - a. buy her a piano
 - b. send her to school
 - c. save it for the new baby
10. What is the most important factor to Billie Jo about being on the road with Arley and the boys?
 - a. the money
 - b. the compliments
 - c. the companionship

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. Why does Billie Jo think her class deserves bonus points for the state test?
2. What's comforting to Billie Jo during this bad time?
3. What do Ma and Daddy argue about?
4. How does Ma deal with her anger at her husband?
5. What is the opera Billie Jo's teacher, Miss Freeland, is singing in?
6. When had Ma planted her treasured apple trees?
7. What are some of the things Billie Jo dreams of doing with the apples from the apple trees?
8. In "Dust and Rain," why is the rain no blessing?
9. Why does Ma say she doesn't want Billie Jo traveling with Arley and the boys?
10. What are some of the reasons Billie Jo likes traveling with Arley and the boys?

II. SPRING 1934**AFTER READING***Deepen Your Understanding*

Rewrite the poem “Tested by Dust” as a prose narrative. (This means write it as a story instead of as a poem.) Do not have Billie Jo tell the story. Instead, write your version in the third person. (This means that instead of Billie Jo saying “I did this,” you would have an outside person saying “Billie Jo did this.”) Try to capture the same mood and emotion that Billie Jo expresses.

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

antiseptic—a substance that helps prevent the spread of germs

grit—sand, gravel

chafed—irritated; rubbed in an irritating way

scorched—burned; dried up and shriveled

quench—to put out; to extinguish

writhed—twisted; distorted

carcasses—dead bodies

withered—dried up and shriveled

octaves—musical intervals of notes and tones

excavating—digging away; removing

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Kerosene is a flammable oil used for fuel.

The Dionne Quintuplets were the miracle babies of their time. The five sisters were born in Canada in 1934. The public adored them, but they were abused by the world. They were taken from their parents by the Ontario government and made wards of the state. Although their health was fine, they lived at a hospital until 1943. People visited the hospital, and the sisters became a huge tourist attraction.

The **cereus plant** is a kind of cactus of the western United States and tropical America. It blooms only briefly.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. Who are the Dionne Quintuplets, and what is the world response to their birth?
2. Why are people leaving Oklahoma for California? What does California hold for them that Oklahoma does not?
3. In what ways does Billie Jo's father disappoint her?
4. Why is the word *devoured* an appropriate title for the poem of that name?
5. What are the effects of Ma's death on Billie Jo and her father?
6. Why is it both ironic and tragic that Billie Jo burned her hands?
7. Who is blamed for the accident? Who does Billie Jo blame?
8. Why does Billie Jo disagree with President Roosevelt's advice to plant trees?
9. What is Billie Jo's reaction to Mrs. Brown's cereus plant? Why can she not watch when the plant wilts and dies?
10. What is "The Path of Our Sorrow"?

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. "The doctor cut away the skin on my hands. . . . He bathed my burns in **antiseptic**."
antiseptic: _____
2. "I was coming home through a howling dust storm, my lowered face was scrubbed raw by dirt and wind. **Grit** scratched my eyes, it crunched between my teeth."
grit: _____
3. "Sand **chafed** inside my clothes, against my skin."
chafed: _____
4. "Daddy has made a tent out of the sheet over Ma so nothing will touch her skin, what skin she has left. . . . She smells like **scorched** meat."
scorched: _____
5. ". . . she cried for the water that would not soothe her throat and **quench** her thirst, . . ."
quench: _____
6. "They didn't say a word about my father drinking himself into a stupor while Ma **writhed**, begging for water."
writhed: _____
7. "On either side of the road are the **carcasses** of jackrabbits, small birds, field mice, stretching out into the distance."
carcasses: _____
8. "My father stares out across his land, empty but for a few **withered** stalks like the tufts on an old man's head."
withered: _____
9. ". . . there are only these lumps of flesh that once were hands long enough to span **octaves**, . . ."
octaves: _____
10. "My father hired on at Wireless Power on Tuesday, **excavating** for towers. He said, 'I'm good at digging, . . .'"
excavating: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. What does Ma ache for?
 - a. wheat
 - b. melon
 - c. rain
2. Where were the Dionne Quintuplets born?
 - a. California
 - b. Arizona
 - c. Canada
3. What does California offer to Billie Jo and the people of Oklahoma?
 - a. a bath and a haircut
 - b. money and prosperity
 - c. hope and promise
4. What does Ma think was in the pail next to the stove?
 - a. kerosene
 - b. water
 - c. coffee
5. Why does Billie Jo throw the kerosene out the door?
 - a. so that Ma wouldn't get burned more
 - b. so that Daddy could get rid of the kerosene
 - c. so that the kitchen wouldn't catch on fire
6. What does Billie Jo's father do with the emergency money?
 - a. He pays Doc Rice to care for Ma.
 - b. He uses it to buy alcohol.
 - c. He buys food for the family.
7. What "devours" everything at the farm?
 - a. dust
 - b. grasshoppers
 - c. fire
8. Who comes to care for Billie Jo's baby brother?
 - a. Doc Rice
 - b. the neighbors
 - c. Aunt Ellis
9. Who is the baby named for?
 - a. his daddy
 - b. the reverend
 - c. the president
10. What does President Roosevelt say will end the drought?
 - a. trees
 - b. animals
 - c. roots

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. What does Billie Jo compare her mother to in “Hope Is a Drizzle”?
2. Who is Elzire Dionne, and what is Ma’s reaction to her news?
3. Who is the “Wild Boy of the Road”?
4. Why does Billie Jo want to “someday” walk to California?
5. How does Billie Jo get burned?
6. How and where is Ma buried?
7. Why do people blame Billie Jo for her Ma’s death?
8. Why does Billie Jo go to Arley’s house?
9. Why does Billie Jo say she will never forgive her father?
10. What are the “gatherings” of Billie Jo’s life?

Deepen Your Understanding

Reread the poem “The Accident.” What phrases does the author repeat? Why does the author use repetition? Do you think this is an effective device? Why or why not?

IV. WINTER 1935

BEFORE READING

*Focus Your Reading**Vocabulary Words to Know*

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

suffocated—deprived of oxygen

grime—soot or dirt that sticks to a surface

frail—fragile; easily broken

basin—an open vessel used for holding
water for washing

festered—inflamed; filled with pus

musky—having an odor of musk

parched—deprived of natural moisture;
dried up

chaos—a state of utter confusion

curdling—spoiling; turning sour (milk or
cream)

smothered—overcome by a lack of air

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Sod is turf, or grass.

A **duster** is a dust storm.

Infantile paralysis is another name for poliomyelitis, a serious infectious disease that affects the central nervous system.

Mash is crushed grain meal used in the production of beer or whiskey.

Apple pandowdy is a sweet apple dessert.

The Lindberghs were a famous American family. Charles Lindbergh was a celebrated airplane pilot in the days when aviation was new. His wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, was an author. The Lindberghs suffered the loss of their baby boy, who was kidnapped and murdered.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. What are some of the ways Billie Jo reveals that she misses her mother?
2. What are some of the effects—both on property and people—of the dust storms?
3. How are Billie Jo and her dad alike? How is she different from her mother?
4. What are signs that Billie Jo and her father are beginning to heal from Ma's death?
5. Who are the "guests" at the school? Why does their presence mean so much to Billie Jo?
6. What are some of the ways Billie Jo demonstrates her pride?
7. How does Billie Jo feel about her father attending night school?
8. What is the tone of these poems? What are some of the words used to communicate that mood?

IV. WINTER 1935

DURING READING

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. "Too hard to watch their lungs clog with dust, like our chickens, **suffocated**."
suffocated: _____
2. "I place a wet cloth over my nose to keep from breathing dust and wipe the **grime** tracings from around my mouth, . . ."
grime: _____
3. "And later, when the clouds lift, the farmers, surveying their fields, nod their heads as the **frail** stalks revive, . . ."
frail: _____
4. "My father stares at me while I sit across from him at the table, while I wash dishes in the **basin**, my back to him, the picked and **festered** bits of my hands in agony."
basin: _____
festered: _____
5. "Now he smells of dust and coffee, tobacco and cows. None of the **musky** woman smell left that was Ma."
musky: _____
6. "Course they never will, not with my hands all scarred up, looking like the earth itself, all **parched** and rough and cracking, . . ."
parched: _____
7. ". . . in the sweaty dim **chaos** backstage I ignored the pain running up and down my arms, I felt like I was part of something grand."
chaos: _____
8. "Nobody knew how to keep that produce truck on the road. . . it sat out in front of Pete's drafty shack, and sits there still, the cream **curdling**, the apples going soft."
curdling: _____
9. "Joe De La Flor stopped by around four to tell me they found one boy tangled in a barbed-wire fence, another **smothered** in a drift of dust."
smothered: _____

IV. WINTER 1935

DURING READING

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. Who is Billie Jo's Ma at the Christmas dinner?
 - a. Daddy
 - b. Aunt Ellis
 - c. Miss Freeland
2. What has to be done with Joe De La Flor's cattle?
 - a. He has to sell them to the government.
 - b. He has them shot.
 - c. He drives them into the Beaver River.
3. Why is Billie Jo reluctant to do all the chores Ma would have done around the house?
 - a. She doesn't like to do housework.
 - b. She doesn't think her father will appreciate it.
 - c. She'd like her hands to rest.
4. Why did Ma "make herself over"?
 - a. She always admired farm life.
 - b. She had to adjust to being a mother.
 - c. She had to fit her husband's life.
5. What was the main purpose of the Birthday Ball?
 - a. to give the folks an evening out
 - b. to raise money
 - c. to forget the dust storms
6. Who is the President's Ball named for?
 - a. President Theodore Roosevelt
 - b. President Woodrow Wilson
 - c. President Franklin Roosevelt
7. Why does the family move into Billie Jo's classroom?
 - a. They were seeking shelter from the dust.
 - b. They wanted to go to school to learn.
 - c. They were friends of the teacher, Miss Freeland.
8. What does Billie Jo suspect is her father's reason for attending night school?
 - a. He wants to learn civics.
 - b. He wants to get away from Billie Jo.
 - c. He wants to be in the company of ladies.
9. What happens to Pete Guymon?
 - a. He flees to California.
 - b. He dies of dust pneumonia.
 - c. He decides not to sell produce anymore.
10. Where does Billie Jo's father go during the dust storm?
 - a. to night school
 - b. to find Joe De La Flor
 - c. out looking for Billie Jo

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. Why doesn't Billie Jo make cranberry sauce for Christmas dinner?
2. Why does Billie Jo feel that Ma is "haunting" her?
3. After Ma's death, what does Pa spend his days doing?
4. How are Billie Jo and her father alike?
5. How much money is raised at the Birthday Ball? Is that more or less than the previous year?
6. Who are the "guests" at the schoolhouse?
7. What happens to the sugar intended for moonshine?
8. In the poem "Dreams," what does Billie Jo dream of?
9. How does Billie Jo do when she plays at the Palace Theater?
10. Why can't Billie Jo play well at the school show?

Deepen Your Understanding

A character is a person (or an animal, or even a thing) that plays a role in a story. In what way is nature a character in this book? Look at the way nature affects characters and events. How does nature have a life of its own? A will of its own? Explain.

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

ignite—to set on fire

warped—twisted out of shape

sparse—thinly grown

sulking—moody and silent

swarmed—moved in a great mass

desperation—loss of hope; despair

groped—to feel one's way

divining—feeling your way along

hospitality—pleasant treatment or reception

glowering—staring with anger or annoyance

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway was commonly known as **the Santa Fe**. It operated between Chicago and the Gulf States and the Pacific Coast.

Running boards were footboards on the side of automobiles or trucks. They helped people get into their vehicles.

FERA was an acronym for the Federal Emergency Relief Association. It paid out about three billion dollars for relief or wages on public works.

CCC stands for Civilian Conservation Corps. This organization employed 3,000,000 young men in forestry work, road building, and flood control during the Great Depression.

April 14, 1935, was called **Black Sunday**. The worst “black blizzard” of the Dust Bowl occurred that day, causing extensive damage. The author bases her poem “Blankets of Black” on that historical event.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. How is Billie Jo's restlessness becoming more apparent?
2. How is Billie Jo changing? Becoming more mature?
3. Why is Billie Jo worried about her father?
4. How are fire and dust alike? How are they different? What are Billie Jo's feelings about them?
5. Who are the "migrants"? Why does Billie Jo refer to these people as migrants? What image is created by the use of the word?
6. How does Mad Dog Craddock show he cares for Billie Jo?
7. Why does Billie Jo compare the dust storms to the Dionne Quintuplets?
8. Why is Billie Jo nervous about the letter from Aunt Ellis? Why do you think her father keeps the letter where she can see it?

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. "But the entire Oklahoma Panhandle is so dry, everything is going up in flames. Everything too ready to **ignite**."
ignite: _____
2. "... nothing remained but **warped** metal, and twisted rails, scorched dirt, and charred ties."
warped: _____
3. "And so they go, fleeing the blowing dust, fleeing the fields of brown-tipped wheat barely ankle high, and **sparse** as the hair on a dog's belly."
sparse: _____
4. "I was **sulking** in the truck beside my father when heaven's shadow crept across the plains, ..."
sulking: _____
5. "The blowing dirt ran so thick I couldn't see the brim of my hat as we plunged from the truck fleeing. The dust **swarmed** like it had never **swarmed** before."
swarmed: _____
6. "We ran, a blind pitching toward the shelter of a small house, almost invisible, our hands tight together, running toward the ghostly door, pounding on it with **desperation**."
desperation: _____
7. "My father **groped** for my hand, pulled me away from the truck."
groped: _____
8. "One family came in clutched together, their pa, **divining** the path with a long wooden rod."
divining: _____
9. "But for the sake of the crowd, and the **hospitality** of the home that sheltered us, we held on and waited, ..."
hospitality: _____
10. "He just keeps that invitation from her, **glowering** down at me from the shelf above the piano."
glowering: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. How does Billie Jo show that she is embarrassed about the scars on her hands?
 - a. She won't talk to anyone—especially Mad Dog.
 - b. She keeps her arms crossed in front of her.
 - c. She keeps her hands in her pockets.
2. Why doesn't anyone talk with Billie Jo about fire?
 - a. They know she is only interested in music.
 - b. They know she caused her mother's accident.
 - c. They know fire changed her life.
3. Where are Billie Jo and her father going when the dust storm hits?
 - a. to church and then a picnic
 - b. to town to do some shopping
 - c. to Grandma Lucas's funeral
4. What keeps Billie Jo's spirit alive during the devastating dust storm?
 - a. the company she shares
 - b. the wet cloth she uses to breathe through
 - c. the food offered by the hosts
5. What is "help from Uncle Sam"?
 - a. feed for the cows
 - b. money to keep the farm going
 - c. food for all the farmers in the Panhandle
6. Why would Billie Jo like to see Doc Rice?
 - a. so that he could look at her hands and her father's face
 - b. so that he could look at the spots on her skin
 - c. so that she could talk to him about her father
7. What is the rain's gift?
 - a. cattle
 - b. feed
 - c. grass
8. Which hometown people sing big-time music in Amarillo?
 - a. Miller Rice and Vera
 - b. Arley Wanderdale and Mad Dog
 - c. Billie Jo Kelby and Arley Wanderdale
9. What is in the parcel found at the church?
 - a. baby clothing
 - b. a sack of sugar
 - c. an infant
10. What kind of old bones are discovered in Cimarron County?
 - a. cattle
 - b. dinosaur
 - c. human

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. How do Jim Goin and Harry Kesler put out the fire at the train yard?
2. Why does the mail train get stuck?
3. Where is Billie Jo invited to live?
4. Where do Billie Jo and her father take refuge during the dust storm?
5. Why is Mad Dog going to Amarillo?
6. Who is James Kingsbury?
7. What happens when Billie Jo is invited to play at graduation?
8. Why does everyone gather at the Joyce City Hardware and Furniture Company?
9. Who takes care of the baby found at the church?
10. Where had Ma hoped Billie Jo would go to school?

Deepen Your Understanding

How does the theme of survival run through this book? How do the characters in the book cope with hardships? What keeps them going? Do you think you could have survived what Billie Jo did? What coping techniques would you have used? Explain your answers.

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

kerchief—a square of cloth used as a head covering or worn as a scarf around the neck

hoarding—keeping for oneself

gaunt—lean, excessively thin

sustain—to keep someone going, to give support

mottled—covered with spots and blotches

nourish—to promote growth

sassy—lively, vigorous

intentions—someone's purpose with respect to marriage

betrothal—wedding engagement; a promise or contract for a future marriage

diversification—engagement in varied operations, such as growing a variety of crops rather than just one

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

The phrase “headed east, to Mr. Roosevelt” means headed to the east coast, to Washington D.C., home of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

A **boxcar** is a roofed freight car with sliding doors.

Camps of dust bowl migrants were camps established during the Great Depression where homeless people lived temporarily as they moved from place to place.

A **tumbleweed** is a plant that breaks away from its roots and is blown around by the wind.

Cancer is a disease marked by tumorlike growths.

Ointment is a soothing substance for application to the skin.

Black Mesa is a mountain range in Oklahoma that is 4,973 feet high.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. What is the meaning of Billie Jo's dream in the poem "The Dream"?
2. What are the causes of Billie Jo's bitterness?
3. Why does Billie Jo finally decide to run away?
4. How does meeting the man on the train help Billie Jo to decide to return home?
5. How does Billie Jo's relationship with her father change when she returns home? What did they both learn when Billie Jo ran away?
6. Who is Louise? What does Billie Jo think of her? How does Louise treat Billie Jo? What are some of the things Billie Jo admires about this new woman in her father's life?
7. What are some of the things Billie Jo is thankful for? What does her "Thanksgiving List" reveal about her?
8. How does Billie Jo regard hard times?
9. How does she regard growth as a person?

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. "... I try to still my heart as I slip from my room with my **kerchief** of dimes."
kerchief: _____
2. "I feed him two of the stale biscuits I've been **hoarding** and save the rest."
hoarding: _____
3. "I'll be hungry tonight, what with giving my day's biscuits away. But I can see the **gaunt** of hunger in his cheeks."
gaunt: _____
4. "My father was more like the sod. Steady, silent, and deep. Holding on to life, with reserves underneath to **sustain** him, and me, and anyone else who came near."
sustain: _____
5. "Doc looks carefully at the **mottled** skin, the stretched and striped and crackled skin."
mottled: _____
6. "I walk with Daddy around the farm and see that the pond is holding its own, it will keep Ma's apple trees alive, **nourish** her garden, help the grass around it grow, ..."
nourish: _____
7. "I'm getting to know the music again. And it is getting to know me ... We are both confident, and a little **sassy**."
sassy: _____
8. "... Daddy walked with Louise instead of me out to Ma and Franklin's grave, where he let Ma know his **intentions**."
intentions: _____
9. "Daddy bought a second mule with Louise's help. Her **betrothal** gift to him."
betrothal: _____
10. "Daddy said he'd try some sorghum, maybe some cotton, admitting as how there might be something to this notion of **diversification** folks were talking about, ..."
diversification: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. Who or what is Billie Jo's silent mother?
 - a. Louise
 - b. the piano
 - c. Aunt Ellis
2. Where is Billie Jo going when she runs away?
 - a. east
 - b. to Mr. Roosevelt
 - c. west
3. What "gift" does the man on the train give Billie Jo?
 - a. biscuits
 - b. cloth bag
 - c. a picture
4. What does Billie Jo admit scares her father and her the most?
 - a. developing cancer
 - b. being in a dust storm
 - c. being left alone
5. What double sorrow does Billie Jo's father experience?
 - a. his grief and his wife's
 - b. his grief and Billie Jo's
 - c. his wife's grief and Billie Jo's
6. Who is waiting at the train station when Billie Jo returns home?
 - a. Louise
 - b. Mr. Hardly
 - c. Daddy
7. Where is the one place Billie Jo does not want Louise to go?
 - a. Ma's kitchen
 - b. the barn
 - c. Ma's grave
8. What attracted Louise to Billie Jo's father?
 - a. his smile
 - b. his love for his daughter
 - c. his hurt
9. What does Billie Jo like most about Louise?
 - a. Louise is a really good cook.
 - b. Louise doesn't tell her what to do.
 - c. Louise is able to get her father to wash the dishes.
10. What does Billie Jo believe hard times are about?
 - a. what happens when dust storms hit
 - b. what happens when you are alone in life
 - c. what happens when dreams fade

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. What are the causes of Billie Jo's bitterness?
2. What does Billie Jo believe her father is digging?
3. Why did the stranger on the train leave his family?
4. Why does Billie Jo go home?
5. What advice does Doc Rice give Billie Jo about her hands?
6. What are some ways Billie Jo and her father are alike?
7. Who is the other woman in the life of Billie Jo's father?
8. What are some of the things Billie Jo tells Louise about her mother?
9. What are some of the things that Billie Jo is thankful for?
10. Describe some of the things Billie Jo says Louise "knows."

Deepen Your Understanding

The author chose to tell her story in free verse, rather than prose. Free verse is a poem without a set rhyme or rhythm. Prose is regular writing, the kind usually used to tell a story or to give information.

How do you think the story would be different if the author had told it in prose? Do you think prose or poetry is more effective for this story? Explain.

End-of-Book Test

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. Why were people migrating out of Oklahoma in the 1930s?
 - a. They were going to California to pan for gold.
 - b. They didn't like the lack of sun and shortage of rain.
 - c. They couldn't survive because of the dust.
2. Why does Daddy use Ma's emergency money to get drunk?
 - a. He is celebrating the end of the drought.
 - b. He thinks that it is an emergency and therefore an appropriate time.
 - c. He is depressed about the circumstances of his life.
3. Why do some neighbors believe Ma's death is Billie Jo's fault?
 - a. They know Billie Jo and her mother had argued about music.
 - b. It was Billie Jo who threw the pail of kerosene.
 - c. Daddy tells them Billie Jo is to blame.
4. Why does Billie Jo say that Reverend Bingham never really knew her mother?
 - a. He had never heard her play the piano.
 - b. He had never really spoken with her.
 - c. He had never been to her house.
5. Why is the burning of her hands a kind of death for Billie Jo?
 - a. She becomes physically ill.
 - b. She can't cook for her father.
 - c. She can't play the piano.
6. After the accident, why doesn't Billie Jo try to play the piano again?
 - a. Her father discourages her from playing.
 - b. She prefers to listen to others play.
 - c. She is depressed and has lost the desire to play.
7. After the accident, why does Arley ask Billie Jo to play?
 - a. to build her confidence
 - b. He likes her company.
 - c. He needs her help.
8. What is Miss Freeland explaining in the poem "The Path of Our Sorrow"?
 - a. how the people of Oklahoma have endured sorrow
 - b. how the cattle have been destroyed
 - c. how the dust storms came to be
9. What do the "guests" at the schoolhouse represent to Billie Jo?
 - a. despair
 - b. hope
 - c. prosperity
10. Why is Billie Jo concerned that her father will come looking for her in the dust storm?
 - a. She doesn't want to be found by anyone.
 - b. She doesn't want to be responsible for the loss of another parent.
 - c. She knows that her father is not able to survive a dust storm.

(continued)

End-of-Book Test (continued)

11. How does the weather affect Billie Jo's mood?
 - a. Rain and snow cause despair.
 - b. Dust and rain cause despair; snow brings hope.
 - c. Dust and drought cause despair; rain brings hope.
12. Why does it take so long for Billie Jo's father to see the doctor about his skin?
 - a. He doesn't like Doc Rice, so he doesn't care what he says.
 - b. He is stubborn and in denial about a possible problem.
 - c. He doesn't think the doctor helped his wife and, therefore, he can't help him, either.
13. Who does Billie Jo have to forgive for her mother's death?
 - a. her father and her mother
 - b. her mother and herself
 - c. her father and herself
14. Given the doctor's advice about Billie Jo's hands, what do you think about the seriousness of her injury?
 - a. She will probably not be able to use her hands again for a very long time.
 - b. She can one day overcome the injury if she tries.
 - c. She will never play the piano again.
15. What is one way Louise shows her wisdom in dealing with Billie Jo?
 - a. She doesn't try to come between Billie Jo and her father.
 - b. She cooks the things Billie Jo's father likes to eat.
 - c. She wears a hat that Billie Jo admires.
16. What does playing with the Black Mesa Boys offer Billie Jo?
 - a. a chance to play other instruments
 - b. a bonding with her mother
 - c. a sense of belonging
17. Why do you think Billie Jo has nightmares about her mother?
 - a. She wants to play the piano as well as her mother did.
 - b. She is haunted by her mother's memory.
 - c. She is afraid of having to live with Aunt Ellis.
18. Billie Jo plays the piano even when she is in great pain. What does this reveal about her?
 - a. She is proud and determined.
 - b. She can stand the criticism of others.
 - c. She wants everyone to feel pity for her.
19. What does Billie Jo learn about her mother when she runs away?
 - a. Her mother had been stronger than her father.
 - b. Her mother had been like sod.
 - c. Her mother had held on as long as she could.
20. How does Billie Jo describe hard times?
 - a. just drought and dust
 - b. broken machinery and lack of money
 - c. losing spirit and hope

Answer Key

I. WINTER 1934

Build Your Vocabulary

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definition based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. a | 6. c |
| 2. c | 7. c |
| 3. a | 8. c |
| 4. c | 9. b |
| 5. b | 10. b |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. They move to California to try to escape the dust storms and to find work.
2. She loves playing the piano, and she feels a sense of belonging.
3. They give food to people, and they return the four cents to Mr. Hardly.
4. His attic collapses in a dust storm. There is a lot of damage to his property, and he loses some of his stock.
5. Plates are turned upside down, glasses are placed bottom side up, and napkins are folded over silverware. The purpose is to keep the dust off.
6. They couldn't find work or food, and her brother went off on his own.
7. Billie Jo was five. Her mother taught her to play.
8. She explains that it rains often enough to keep him hopeful, and that hope is all a farmer has.
9. She is worried that it will keep Billie Jo from her schoolwork, she may be a little jealous, and she thinks Billie Jo might leave to do things she herself cannot do.
10. Billie Jo wishes that her mother would have more praise for her.

Deepen Your Understanding

Answers will vary.

II. SPRING 1934

Build Your Vocabulary

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definition based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. b |
| 2. b | 7. c |
| 3. c | 8. c |
| 4. c | 9. b |
| 5. b | 10. c |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. The test was taken during a dust storm.
2. the piano
3. They argue about what to grow, which crops to plant.
4. She throws herself into her chores.
5. *Madame Butterfly*
6. She planted them before Billie Jo was born.
7. She dreams of making pies, sauce, pudding, dumplings, and so forth.
8. It came too fast and too hard. It washed away the soil and the wheat.
9. She doesn't want Billie Jo to be tired, and she doesn't want her chores to slip.
10. She likes being part of the crowd, she likes being somewhere new and different, and she can play the piano.

Deepen Your Understanding

Answers will vary. You may want to take the opportunity to conduct a minilesson on point of view. You may want to introduce the word narrator when discussing who tells the story. Many books are written in the third person; a short example of this point of view from a book students have read may be contrasted with the first-person point of view.

III. SUMMER 1934–AUTUMN 1934

Build Your Vocabulary

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definition based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. b |
| 2. c | 7. b |
| 3. c | 8. c |
| 4. b | 9. c |
| 5. c | 10. a |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. She compares her mother to a striped melon.
2. She is the mother of the Dionne Quintuplets. Ma cries when she hears of the birth of the five babies.
3. He is a boy who is working his way to California, who gets work, food, and clothes from the Kelbys.
4. She wants to escape the dust and the wind.
5. She used her hands to try to beat out the flames burning her mother.
6. She is buried with baby Franklin in the yard on a rise she loved.
7. They know that she threw the pail of kerosene.
8. to listen to him play the piano
9. She won't forgive him because it was he who had left the kerosene by the stove.
10. the meaningful items kept in the boxes in her closet

Deepen Your Understanding

Repeated phrases include "got burned bad," "thinking," "I didn't know," "desperate," and "Ma." Students' answers as to the purpose and effectiveness of this device will vary. Some may suggest that the repetition is a reflection of the inability to get a terrible image out of one's mind, or it may indicate the speed with which the narrator is speaking. The punctuation (many commas) supports this idea, too.

IV. WINTER 1935

Build Your Vocabulary

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definition based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. c |
| 2. b | 7. a |
| 3. c | 8. c |
| 4. c | 9. b |
| 5. b | 10. c |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. Her mother never showed her how.
2. She keeps thinking of all the things Ma did that she is not doing, such as cleaning up the mud and taking better care of the house.
3. working the farm, digging for the electric train folks, or digging the pond
4. They rub their eyes the same way; they wipe the milk from their lips the same way.
5. The Birthday Ball raised \$33, slightly more than the previous year.
6. They were a homeless family who took temporary shelter at the schoolhouse because their baby was due any day.
7. Miss Freeland used it for baking.
8. She dreams of being able to play the piano again one day.
9. She won third prize.
10. Her hands hurt too much; they were sore from playing before.

Deepen Your Understanding

Answers will vary.

V. SPRING 1935

Build Your Vocabulary

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definition based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. a |
| 2. c | 7. c |
| 3. c | 8. b |
| 4. a | 9. c |
| 5. b | 10. b |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. They separated the cars to keep the other cars from catching fire.
2. It was caught in the dust.
3. She was invited to live with Aunt Ellis in Lubbock, Texas.
4. in the home of a woman who opened her home to them and others trapped in the storm
5. He was going to sing on the radio and perhaps get a job.
6. a photographer from the Toronto Star newspaper
7. She couldn't do it because her hands wouldn't work.
8. to hear Mad Dog Craddock sing on the radio
9. the Reverend Bingham and his wife
10. She had hoped that Billie Jo would go to Panhandle A & M to study music.

Deepen Your Understanding

Answers will vary.

VI. SUMMER 1935–AUTUMN 1935**Build Your Vocabulary**

Wording and definitions may vary. Students may remember the definitions given in the Vocabulary Words to Know section of Focus Your Reading, or they may refine the definition based on the context and the reading overall. Students' new sentences will vary.

Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. c |
| 2. c | 7. c |
| 3. c | 8. c |
| 4. c | 9. b |
| 5. b | 10. c |

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer

1. the dust, the silence of her father, the absence of her mother
2. his grave

3. He couldn't handle the difficulties any more. He lost his land; he couldn't make anything grow.
4. Running away wasn't any better; it was just different.
5. He advises her to stop picking at them, to put ointment on them, and to use them.
6. red hair, dreams of running away, long legs, the way they rub their eyes
7. Louise is his new lady friend.
8. She had brown eyes, she filled a bowl with apples, she put wildflowers in a jar, she liked poetry; they weren't always happy.
9. Answers will vary but should include items from "Thanksgiving List."
10. Answers will vary but may include to keep a home, to cook, to make things last through winters and drought.

Deepen Your Understanding

Answers will vary. You may want to explain the difference between prose and poetry. Although the word *prose* may sound intimidating, students will soon realize that they already know what this is—the language of stories.

END-OF-BOOK TEST

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. c | 11. c |
| 2. c | 12. b |
| 3. b | 13. c |
| 4. a | 14. b |
| 5. c | 15. a |
| 6. c | 16. c |
| 7. a | 17. b |
| 8. c | 18. a |
| 9. b | 19. c |
| 10. b | 20. c |